

Southwest Indianapolis Air Toxics Study Article 2

State environmental agency worked with experts, locals on study

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) created two advisory groups to help develop and communicate the results of a study of air toxics in Southwest Indianapolis. The study results will be presented to the public at 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 11, at the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center.

IDEM invited community members and scientific experts to participate in the Public Advisory Group (PAG) and Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for the Southwest Indianapolis Air Toxics Study. Together, these two groups helped IDEM conduct a study with sound scientific results that can be clearly communicated to the Hoosiers most affected by air quality in Southwest Indianapolis.

The TAG included scientists, environmentalists, toxicologists, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and other stakeholders to give technical feedback on the methods IDEM used in the study.

"I was pleased to see that the Technical Advisory Group had a number of local experts on it, as well as representatives from the U.S. EPA," said Dr. Philip Stevens, Indiana University professor, Indiana Air Pollution Control Board member, and TAG member. "IDEM worked closely with the TAG and took our comments and concerns into account when analyzing the air toxics data."

The TAG met with IDEM 11 times since it was formed in August 2006. Most meetings were video recorded and streamed over the Internet. These videos can be found on IDEM's Web site at www.IN.gov/idem/4500.htm.

The PAG included leaders and representatives from local community groups, schools, churches, health organizations and the City of Indianapolis. This group met 12 times since being formed in the summer of 2008. The group's goal was to facilitate communication between IDEM and residents and workers in Southwest Indianapolis.

"The PAG has provided neighborhood residents and community leaders a forum for obtaining study information and an avenue for voicing questions, concerns and input as to how IDEM can clearly and succinctly communicate study results with the West Indianapolis community," said Beth Gibson, PAG representative for the West Indianapolis Development Corporation.

"Since the *Indianapolis Star* published articles about West Indianapolis' air quality in February, 2004, community stakeholders have listed air quality as one of their top 10 neighborhood and quality of life concerns," said Gibson. "I believe this study gives a much more accurate picture of the air quality in West Indianapolis and I'm looking forward to the release of the study results."

Many TAG and PAG members will be in attendance at the results meeting and will be available to talk to members of the public.

This article is the second in a series written by IDEM to explain the Southwest Indianapolis Air Toxics Study. Additional articles will appear in future editions of the West Side Community News and at www.idem.IN.gov/4500.htm.

SIDE BAR 1

Air toxics study results announced tomorrow

The results of the Southwest Indianapolis Air Toxics Study will be presented to the public at the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center gymnasium on Thursday. The center is located at 1920 West Morris Street in Indianapolis.

Starting at 5 p.m., the public is invited to talk with members of IDEM's staff, local technical experts, and neighborhood members who worked on the study.

IDEM staff will present a brief explanation of the air toxics study results at 5:45 p.m. The public is welcome to ask questions after the presentation.

Free daycare at the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center will be provided from 5 p.m. through 6:30 p.m. to give parents the opportunity see the presentation and ask questions.

SIDE BAR 2

IDEM's Southwest Indianapolis Air Toxics Study

Who: Indiana Department of Environmental Management, City of Indianapolis, U. S. EPA, air toxics experts, and local residents

What: Air quality study that examined 74 air toxics and 12 metals in Southwest Indianapolis

Where: The study area is between 10th Street to the north, Bluff Road to the east, High School Road to the west and Hanna Avenue to the south.

When: Air samples were taken between 2006 and 2008.

Why: National air toxics models identified Southwest Indianapolis as an area that could potentially have high air emissions.

How: IDEM used a U.S. EPA grant to take air samples, collect emissions data, and run computer modeling.